

we were some gang
in that death ballet

we were magnificent

we gave them
better than they asked

yet

we gave them
nothing.

DEAR PAW AND MA

my father liked Edgar Allen
Poe
and my mother liked The
Saturday Evening Post
and she died first
the priest waving a smoking
stick above her
casket
and my father followed
a year or so later
and in that purple velvet
his face looked like ice
painted yellow.

my father never liked
what I wrote: "people
don't want to read this
sort of thing."

"yes, henry," said my
mother, "people like to
read things that make
them happy."

they were my earliest
literary critics
and
they were both
right.

— Charles Bukowski

San Pedro CA